

Strategy 1. Assist AWN partners to become digitally based and Internet-accessible

Partnerships with states, local governments, other federal departments and agencies, Job Corp Centers, non-profit organizations, labor unions, and employer organizations have been the hallmark of ETA's success in recent years. E-government will heighten the need for and value of such partnerships. For this transformation to succeed, all the America's Workforce Network partners must be fully engaged with the Internet in systems that are parallel and work with each other.

Several assumptions serve to clarify this strategy. First, it must be acknowledged that the AWN partners, across states and local agencies have made inconsistent progress in e-government transition. Some are very advanced while others have just started and therefore the role of ETA must be variable and designed to serve each partner as best fits their need. Second, while it is clear that a new reliance will be made on the Internet and its technologies, the AWN must insure that each client receives services in a manner that best meets his/her needs. We must be both "high tech and high touch." Third and finally, the success of this transformation must be measured by confirming that staff providing direct services feel more prepared and more competent to deliver improved services to individual customers.

The key for the success of Strategy One is for ETA to provide direct services and make strategic investments that assist, facilitate and promote opportunities for all partners to become Internet-enabled. A number of sub-strategies for the ETA emerged during the consultation strategy meetings with the regions, including:

- the role of "banker" in making strategic investments to assist partners;
- coordinator with state and local CIOs to assure that the vertical integration of the e-strategies of AWN are consistent with state strategies of horizontal integration;
- coordinator with national organizations and federal partners;
- acting as a clearinghouse and disseminator for ideas, issues, models, strategies and best practices as found across the AWN in states and local regions;
- serving as a monitor to record progress and successes - and to document shortfalls and shortcomings - of the AWN as it moves to this new environment;
- serving to coordinate and/or exchange information concerning e-government education and training activities among the AWN partners as needed to support the e-government transition;
- provider of research and coordinator for discussions among AWN partners to
 - define an e-government threshold of basic service at the local level;
 - define the nature and levels of technical assistance that will be required;

The complexity of the system or network, on the one hand, and the absolute requirement for user-friendly simplicity on the other requires very careful, thoughtful and integrated planning by the entire AWN. It suggests a breadth and depth of partnership that has heretofore not existed in inter-governmental circles. Given limited resources, the ETA may select from one or more of several investment strategies. It may

- invest in "early adopters" of e-government initiatives to assist in keeping them current and having them serve as models for others (e.g., states of Texas, Michigan or Utah);
- invest in states and local areas that are now ready to initiate e-government strategies and need resources to begin;
- invest in states and local areas that have no plans nor resources to begin;
- invest in strategies that address "access" issues across the nation for those with disabilities or to confront the realities of the "digital divide."
- or invest in a combination of several of the above.

If successful, an integrated federal, state, and local e-government service delivery system - based on open system architectures and standards-based information structures - will permit and support

"real time" trend analysis and electronic "scouts" that will help ETA and its partners stay abreast of, and even anticipate, their customers' needs. Internally, electronic decision support systems will synthesize, integrate, and correlate data and assist decision-makers to access that data in usable and relevant knowledge-based chunks around the issues and topics of their interest.

Imagine these scenarios three years from now:

1) A small employer located in a rural area in America's Heartland has the opportunity to expand by becoming the subcontractor on a major international engineering contract if they can retrain their existing workers and find new workers with the right skills. The employer accesses the state's virtual One-Stop Office via the Internet, and places a job order using a job order writing tool that helps the employer identify and articulate the skills that are needed. The tool generates an automatic feed of the state order to the state job bank and AJB, and launches a search of the state's resume bank. Both employed and unemployed workers (including UI claimants and WTW enrollees), whose resumes match the requirements of the job order, are notified by email of the job opportunities. The state's virtual One-Stop follows up with the employer to confirm any hires of UI claimants. Upon confirmation, the system ends the UI claim for those hired, and electronically sends the appropriate information to the state's New Hire Directory. Simultaneously, the career centers at local proprietary schools, technical colleges, and community colleges are sent informed electronically about the job opportunity by the state system, and launch searches of their talent banks to identify students who will soon graduate with these skills, who are quickly referred to the employer. Depending upon the employer's need, the schools may also decide to recruit students for new courses and programs that target the skills the employer needs. The state virtual One-Stop then provides the employer with information, drawn from online repositories of available and approved courses, about distance learning courses that can address the upgrade in skills needed for existing employees. These employees are signed up for the courses, which they may complete at the employer's site or at home. Upon successful completion, they are provided portable credentials documenting the attainment of new skills that they can upload into their Career Management Account. Outcome data is available real time through the state data warehouse, which in turn is used as part of a new statistical process to generate short-term forecasts of local occupational demand.

2). A new urban inter-cultural community center is opening.... Because of the level of technology training offered at the local Job Corps center, students have offered to design a website to announce the opening and provide continually updated information and links to community center services. One group is working to design the page. In order to promote the center and highlight the cultures represented - Hispanic, Asian and Native American - students will incorporate digital animation to create 3-dimensional images for pop-out maps, with music, language, stories, pictures of food, costumes, etc. To do the research, this now becomes a project not only for the local Job Corps center, but also for centers from Hawaii, Alaska and Texas as a collaborative networked project. Students from all four centers participate in virtual field trips to the countries of origin, as well as museums with specialized collections and exhibits on the cultures represented. Experts from La Raza, Asian cultural organizations and tribal councils will be interviewed online and via email for culturally relevant input. Other students will be researching services offered by the community center, compiling a calendar of events, schedule of computer classes, ESL and other distance learning classes video-conferenced in

from the Job Corps centers and community colleges, etc. Links to simultaneous translated email will also be developed to encourage direct communication with e-pen pals in other countries. Job Corps students will assist with the WAN infrastructure needed to link and communicate with the databases of the local One-Stop, thereby allowing direct access to One-Stop support services. Job Corps students will also partner to provide tech support and basic training to community center visitors allowing students to practice direct customer service skills and provide remote help desk experience. In this way they are gaining valuable hours of hands-on experience for industry-recognized certifications. Community leaders will be interviewed and featured on the page; local mom-and-pop businesses will also be highlighted. As a special feature, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology will be incorporated to allow community residents access to directions, public transportation lines, etc. enabling them to attend the opening!